

AARON · SAIZ · AZACETA · HOLLINGSWORTH

PUNISHER

“

STAND DOWN, Marine.
That's an ORDER. This
war of yours is FINISHED.

”



MARVEL 11

PARENTAL ADVISORY

AFTER RETIRED MARINE FRANK CASTLE'S WIFE AND CHILDREN WERE KILLED BY STRAY GUNFIRE DURING A SHOOT-OUT IN CENTRAL PARK, HE BEGAN A ONE-MAN VIGILANTE WAR ON CRIME. ARMED WITH A VAST ARSENAL AND GRIM DETERMINATION, HE BECAME THE...

PUNISHER

THE CULT OF ASSASSINS KNOWN AS THE HAND MADE FRANK CASTLE AN OFFER HE COULDN'T REFUSE: BECOME THEIR HIGH SLAYER IN EXCHANGE FOR THE RESURRECTION OF HIS LONG-DEAD WIFE, MARIA. FRANK NOW SERVES AS THE HAND'S FIST OF THE BEAST, RESIDING IN THEIR FORTRESS IN JAPAN ALONG WITH MARIA. FRANK HAS ALSO GAINED NEW SUPERNATURAL ABILITIES DUE TO HIS CONNECTION TO THE DEMONIC BEAST.

WHILE THE HAND WAS ABLE TO RESURRECT MARIA, THEY HAVE THUS FAR FAILED TO SUCCESSFULLY REVIVE FRANK AND MARIA'S TWO DECEASED CHILDREN. A SUSPICIOUS MARIA DISCOVERED THE CHILDREN'S GRAVES.

CAPTAIN AMERICA, MOON KNIGHT, DR. STRANGE, WOLVERINE AND BLACK WIDOW CONFRONTED FRANK, ALL OF THEM ALARMED BY HIS NEW POWERS AND RECENT ACTIONS.

THE KING OF KILLERS

Book TWO, Chapter FIVE

"A DAY IN THE PARK"

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THERE WAS A MAN AT THE **SHOOTING RANGE**. I THINK THAT'S WHEN I FIRST KNEW.

VERY NICE.



BUT YOU'RE **STANDING** WRONG.



FRANK HAD STOPPED COMING WITH ME, BECAUSE I'D BEEN USING OUR SESSIONS AS A MEANS TO TRY TO GET HIM TO TALK. SOMETIMES IT WORKED.

FRANK WAS ALWAYS MORE RELAXED, MORE LIKELY TO FORGET HIMSELF...WHEN HE HAD A **GUN** IN HIS HAND.



WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO **SHOW** YOU?

THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG WITH MY SHOOTING STANCE. MY **HUSBAND** HAD TAUGHT ME HOW TO STAND.



MY HUSBAND WHO COULD PUT A BULLET IN AN EYE SOCKET FROM HALF A JUNGLE AWAY.

NO.



BUT FOR A MOMENT...I **CONSIDERED** SAYING YES. YES TO THIS MAN WHO ONLY WANTED AN EXCUSE TO PUT HIS HANDS ON ME.

BECAUSE FOR THAT ONE FLEETING MOMENT, I REMEMBERED WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE **DESIRED**.



BLAM

THAT'S HOW I KNEW.



THE MAN ASKED IF I'D LIKE TO GET A DRINK SOMETIME.

IN ANSWER, I PUT THREE SHOTS IN THE TARGET, CENTER MASS, STANDING THE WAY I ALREADY KNEW HOW TO STAND, AND LEFT WITHOUT A WORD.



THE WHOLE WAY HOME, MY MIND WAS CALM. SERENE.

NO SCREAMS ON THE INSIDE. NO TEARS, NO CURSES.



FRANK?

THAT'S HOW THESE THINGS TEND TO HAPPEN, I SUPPOSE. THESE MOST PROFOUND OF MOMENTS.



YOU DON'T EVEN REALIZE YOUR LIFE IS CHANGING FOREVER.

WHY DON'T WE GET THE KIDS OUT OF THE HOUSE THIS WEEKEND?



IT ALL JUST HAPPENS SO FAST. LIKE A GUNSHOT.

LET'S GO TO THE PARK.

OKAY.

NOW.



AREA IS
SECURE. HIS
NINJA ARE
DOWN.

WITH THE
HAND, YOU
SHOULD ALWAYS
ASSUME THERE'S
MORE WHERE THEY
CAME FROM.

HOW MUCH
TIME DO YOU
NEED, DOCTOR?
FOR THIS...



HRRRRRAAIIIGGGGH!!!

...WHATEVER
THE HELL YOU
CALL THIS?



THE ABSCISSION OF ECTOPLASMIC **NECRO-MUCUS**, EACH GLOBULE OF WHICH IS A HIGHLY UNSTABLE, OTHER-DIMENSIONALLY EMPOWERED TUMOR.

PART BRAIN SURGERY, PART BOMB DISPOSAL. IF A BOMB COULD OBLITERATE THE HUMAN SOUL,

BY ALL MEANS, CONTINUE ASKING ME QUESTIONS.

HERE'S HOPING THAT HURTS HIM JUST AS MUCH AS IT LOOKS LIKE IT DOES.

LET'S REMEMBER THAT WE'RE BRINGING HIM IN. WE ARE NOT HERE TO KILL THE PUNISHER.

I DON'T REMEMBER US TAKING A VOTE ON THAT.

STAY FOCUSED. FRANK CASTLE WAS ALREADY AS DANGEROUS AS THEY GET, EVEN BEFORE HE WAS ABLE TO FLY.



HE'S FIGHTING MY ANESTHESIA SPELL! BY THE MOONS OF MUNNOPOR, THE BEAST IS STRONG IN HIM!

HOW CAN WE HELP? WHAT DO WE DO?

YOU...



...YOU SHOULD PROBABLY RUN!

RRRRGGH!







WE WERE NEVER THE KIND OF COUPLE WHO ARGUED IN FRONT OF THE KIDS. WE NEVER REALLY ARGUED AT ALL.



EVERYTHING WITH US WAS QUIET. I SUPPOSE THAT WAS PART OF THE PROBLEM.

AND THAT'S WHAT IT WAS LIKE THAT DAY.



QUIET AS COULD BE. LIKE RESIGNATION HAD LONG SINCE SET IN FOR THE BOTH OF US.

LIKE WE WERE DOOMED SOULS WHO'D BEEN GAZING OUT OF OUR CELL WINDOWS FOR MORE DAYS THAN WE COULD BEAR...



...WATCHING THE GALLOWES GET BUILT.



THERE HADN'T BEEN AN **EXECUTION** IN MONTHS, BUT FRANK STILL STAYED OUT LATE INTO THE NIGHT MOST OF THE TIME.

I HIRED A **PRIVATE DETECTIVE** TO FOLLOW HIM.

TAILED THE TARGET TO **QUEENS** AGAIN.



SAME BUILDING WHERE HE LIVED AS A CHILD. IN THE STREET OUTSIDE, WHEN TARGET WAS 10 YEARS OLD, LOCAL LEGEND SAYS A MAN AND WOMAN WERE **BEATEN TO DEATH**.

NO CHARGES WERE EVER FILED, EVEN THOUGH THE KILLER WAS APPARENTLY WIDELY KNOWN.



KILLER WAS LATER **BURNED ALIVE** BY AN UNKNOWN CULPRIT. TARGET VISITS THE GRAVES OF THE DEAD COUPLE AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK.

QUERY, WHAT IS TARGET'S CONNECTION TO...?





TELL HER
I'M HAVING
AN AFFAIR.

AND DON'T
EVER FOLLOW
ME AGAIN.



THE DETECTIVE TOLD ME
FRANK HAD BEEN SLEEPING
WITH A WAITRESS FROM
STATEN ISLAND, BUT I
COULD HEAR THE FEAR IN
HIS VOICE WHEN HE TOLD ME
NEVER TO CALL HIM AGAIN.



I KNEW THE
FEAR OF FRANK
WHEN I HEARD IT.



I HAVE NO IDEA
WHERE HE ACTUALLY
SPENT HIS NIGHTS.



I JUST KNOW I WAS
ALWAYS **SURPRISED**
WHEN HE'D MAKE IT
BACK HOME.



WHEN HE WASN'T OUT,
HE WAS WORKING ON
THE VAN HE'D BROUGHT
HOME FROM THE JUNKYARD.



HE BOUGHT IT UNEXPECTEDLY,
AND FOR WEEKS TALKED ABOUT
ALL THE *FAMILY TRIPS* WE'D TAKE
TOGETHER ONCE HE WAS
ABLE TO GET IT RUNNING.

DAY AFTER DAY, HE STRIPPED
THAT ENGINE DOWN AND PUT
IT BACK TOGETHER AGAIN.



I NEVER *ONCE*
HEARD HIM TRY
TO START IT.

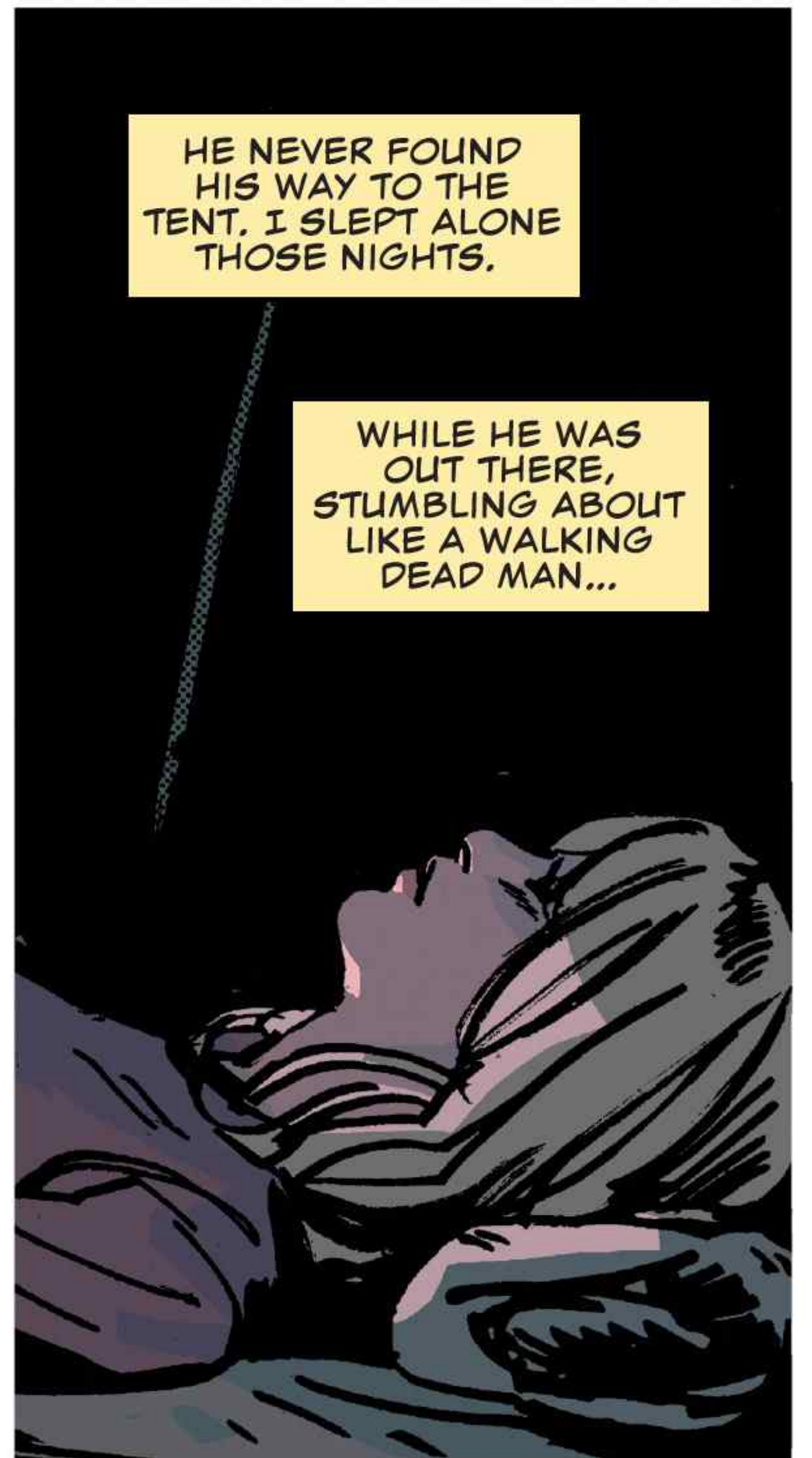
HE DIDN'T SEEM TO NOTICE
WHEN I STARTED SPENDING
SOME NIGHTS IN HIS OLD
TENT OUT BACK.



I THINK PART OF
ME HOPED HE'D
COME TO ME THERE.

NOT THE FRANK WHO
CLIMBED INTO OUR
BED EVERY NIGHT. BUT
THE ONE I HADN'T
SEEN IN MONTHS.

THE ONE I
FEARED WAS
ALREADY DEAD.



HE NEVER FOUND
HIS WAY TO THE
TENT. I SLEPT ALONE
THOSE NIGHTS.

WHILE HE WAS
OUT THERE,
STUMBLING ABOUT
LIKE A WALKING
DEAD MAN...



...IN SEARCH
OF A GRAVE.



NO.

YOU SHOULD'VE COME TO ME, FRANK.

FRONT
TOWARD FRANK



GAAAGGH!

IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS, I'VE SAVED A DOZEN MOTHERS FROM BEING TORN APART WHILE GIVING BIRTH TO BABES WITH HORNS.



HHGGGULUK!

AS WE SPEAK, THERE'S A 1,000-YEAR-OLD MONASTERY IN POLAND WHERE THE FLESH IS SLOUGHING OFF THE FACES OF THE BENEVOLENT MONKS...

...LIKE THEIR SKULLS ARE BEING BOILED BENEATH THEIR SKIN.



YOU SHOULD'VE ASKED ME ABOUT THE PRICE THAT MUST BE PAID WHEN THIS SORT OF ANCIENT MAGIC IS CONJURED.

WHEN THE POWER OF THE BEAST IS UNLEASHED UPON THE PHYSICAL REALM, FOR ONE MAN'S SELFISH ENDS.

BUT YOU DIDN'T ASK ME ANYTHING, FRANK.



SO NOW YOU GET TO SETTLE THAT TAB ALL BY YOURSELF.

GAAAAARRRGGGH!



I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!

I JUST KNOW MY FAMILY HAS PAID ENOUGH!



YOUR FAMILY IS DEAD, FRANK.

OR AT LEAST, THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE.



IF YOU'RE STILL IN THERE, FRANK, THEN LET US HELP YOU.

PRETTY SURE THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE WANTED ALL ALONG. YOU KNEW WE'D COME FOR YOU WHEN YOU WENT TOO FAR.

THAT WE'D COME FOR HER.



GLUGH!

I'LL DO EVERYTHING I CAN FOR MARIA. YOU HAVE MY WORD.



STAY AWAY FROM MY WIFE!



"STAY AWAY FROM YOUR WIFE." GOT IT.

DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING ABOUT STAYING AWAY FROM YOUR FACE.



PIECE OF
ADVICE. FROM ONE
FIST TO ANOTHER.
JUST RELAX AND LET
US KILL YOUR GOD
FOR YOU.

WHOEVER
HE IS, I CAN
PROMISE YOU
HE'S A REAL
#%&@%.

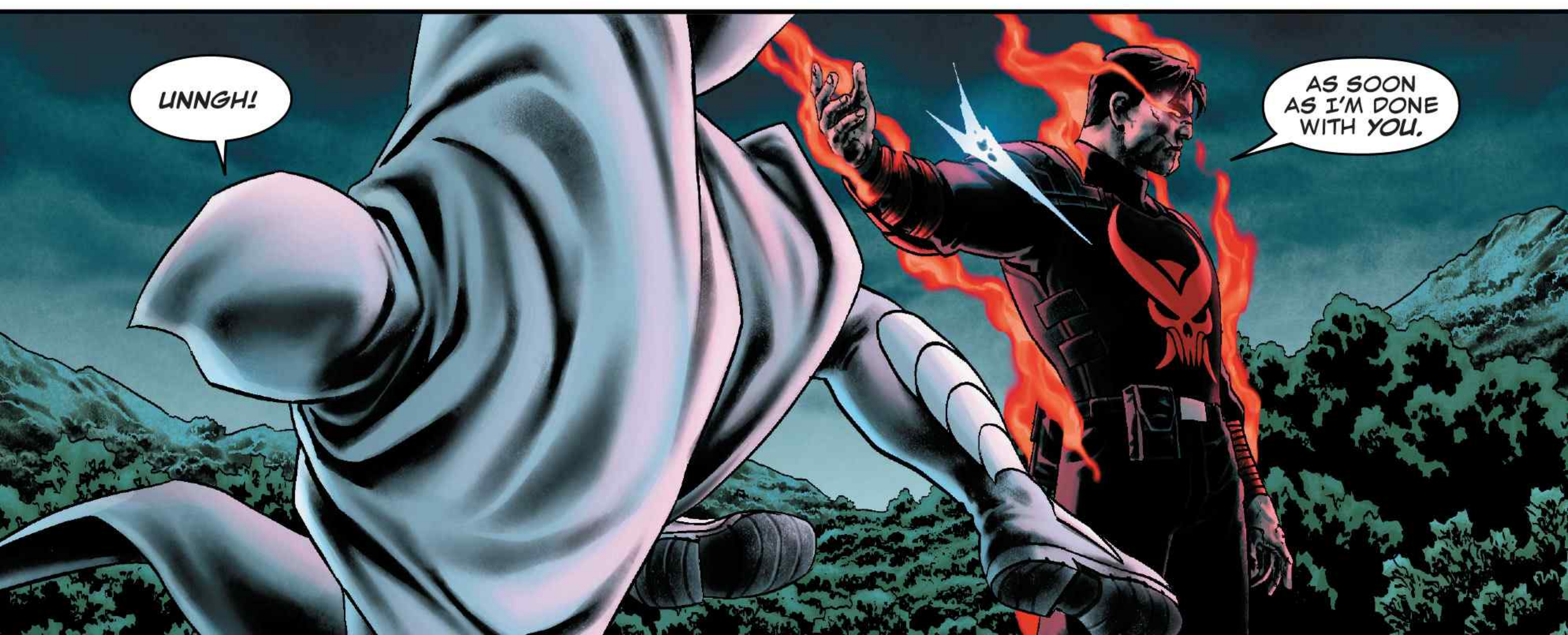


THEN AGAIN,
I MAY HAVE BEEN
MISINFORMED.

YOU
PEOPLE
AREN'T
HEARING
ME.



MY WAR IS
FINISHED. I'M
DONE WITH THE
BEAST, WITH
ALL OF THIS.



UNNGH!

AS SOON
AS I'M DONE
WITH YOU.



OPEN YOUR EYES, FRANK. YOU KNOW WE CAN'T LET THIS HAPPEN.

FOR THE SAKE OF THE WORLD AND EVERYONE IN IT, THE HAND DOES NOT GET TO WIN.

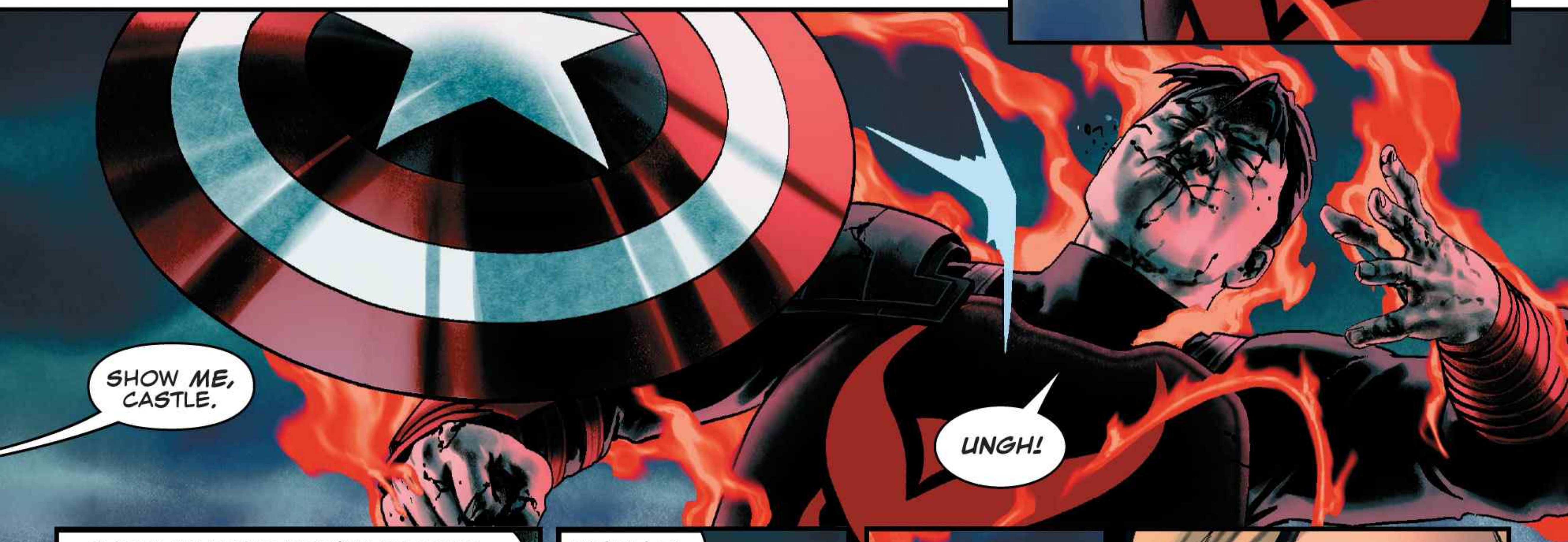


YOU HAVE NO IDEA, NATASHA. NO CLUE HOW MUCH I'M **RESTRAINING** MYSELF.



RESTRAINING THE BEAST. BUT IF YOU PEOPLE DO NOT LEAVE ME BE...

...YOU'LL SEE THE TRUE POWER OF THE HAND'S HIGH SLAYER!



SHOW ME, CASTLE.

UNGH!



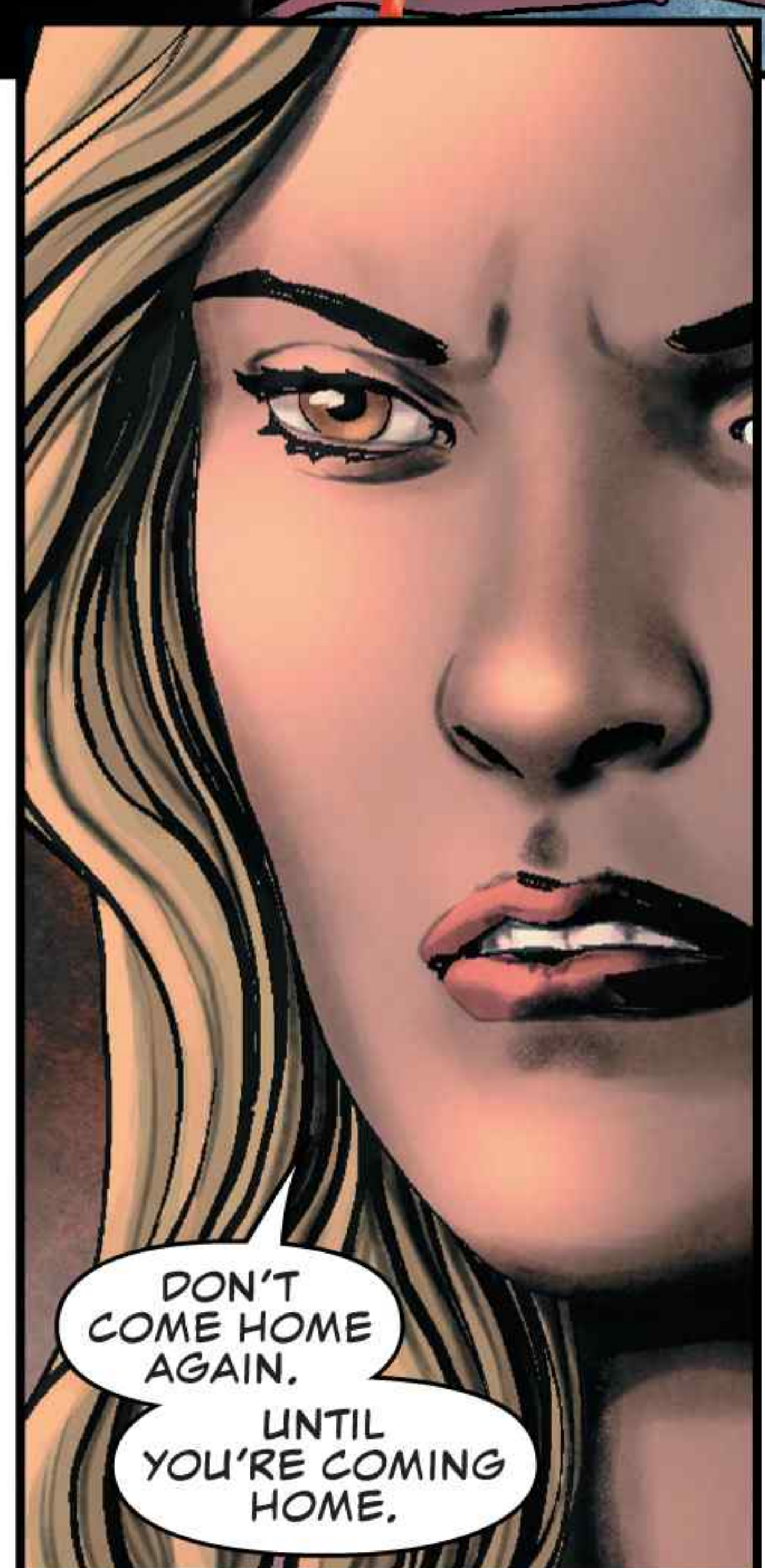
SHOW ME WHAT YOU'VE BECOME, SO I'LL FEEL ALL THE BETTER ABOUT DOING TO YOU WHAT I'M ABOUT TO DO.



WHICH IS PUT YOU DOWN. HARD AS IT TAKES TO KEEP YOU THERE.



AND THEN YOU GO WHERE YOU BELONG. ONCE AND FOR ALL, WHERE YOU'VE ALWAYS BELONGED.



DON'T COME HOME AGAIN. UNTIL YOU'RE COMING HOME.



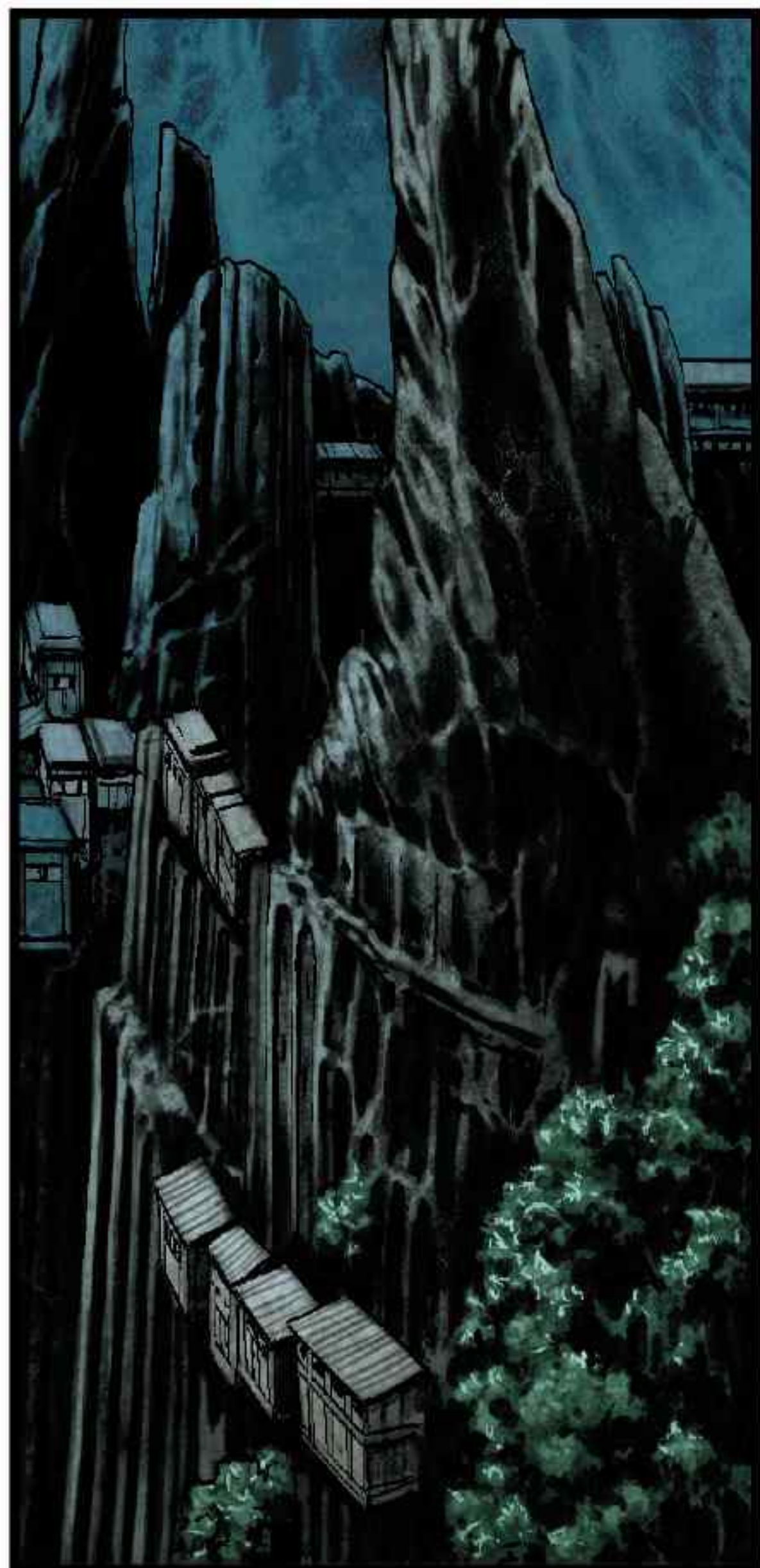
I KNOW
WHERE I BELONG,
CAPTAIN.

AND I'M
SORRY...



...BUT YOU
DON'T HAVE A
CHANCE IN HELL
OF **STOPPING**
ME...

...FROM
GOING
HOME!!!



IS THERE
A **LIBRARY**
HERE WITHIN THE
CITADEL?

OF COURSE,
MADAM. WE HOUSE
EXTENSIVE RECORDS
OF EVERY MURDER
EVER COMMITTED,
GOING BACK--

TAKE ME
THERE.



"AND SHOW ME
EVERYTHING THERE
IS TO KNOW ABOUT
THE **PUNISHER**."

HE'S
FIGHTING IT, MY
LORD. FIGHTING
AGAINST HIS FULL
REDEMPTION AT
YOUR RED
HAND.



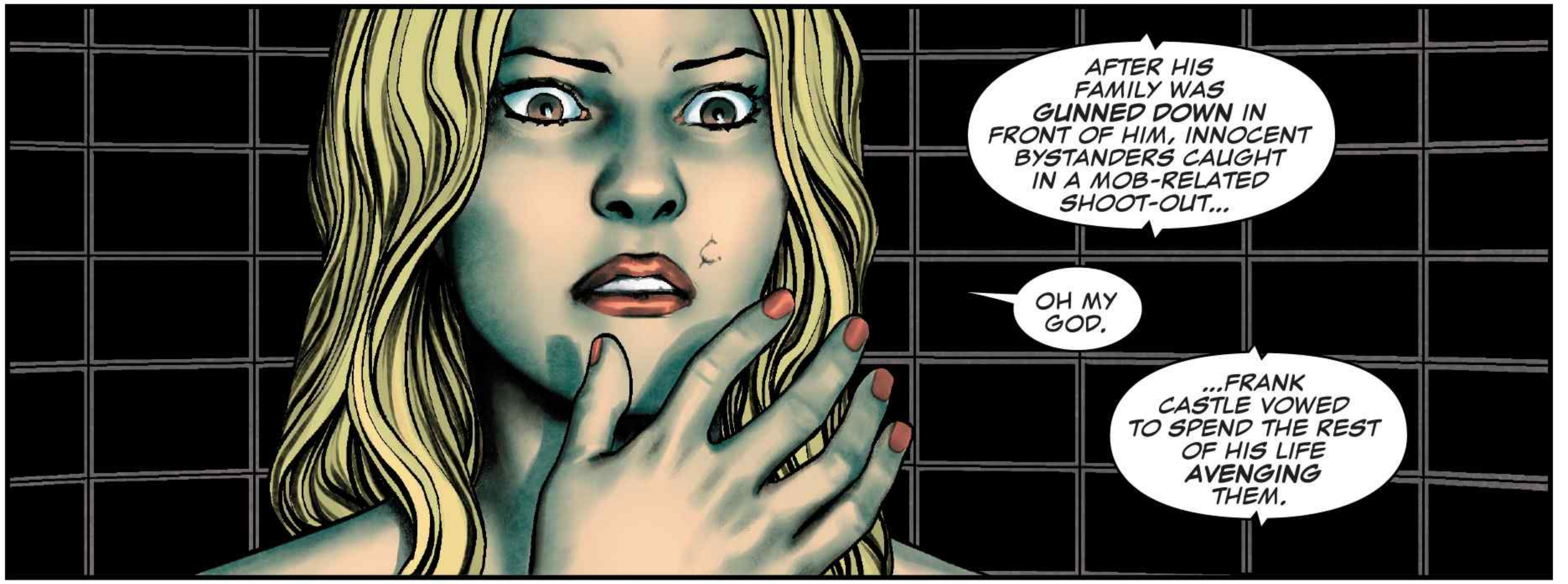
GRANT HIM
THE MURDEROUS
PEACE OF MIND THAT
WILL LEAD TO THE
BLESSED SLAUGHTER
OF MILLIONS, OH
GREAT BEAST.

MAKE HIM
WHOLE.



"BRING FRANK
CASTLE HOME."





AFTER HIS FAMILY WAS GUNNED DOWN IN FRONT OF HIM, INNOCENT BYSTANDERS CAUGHT IN A MOB-RELATED SHOOT-OUT...

OH MY GOD.

...FRANK CASTLE VOWED TO SPEND THE REST OF HIS LIFE AVENGING THEM.



TRAINED AS A MARINE AND EQUIPPED WITH A STATE-OF-THE-ART ARSENAL, HE HAS WAGED A ONE-MAN WAR ON--

SHOW ME.

SHOW ME EVERYTHING.



SHOW ME WHAT HE'S DONE IN OUR NAMES.

WHEN MY HUSBAND STOPPED COMING TO THE SHOOTING RANGE...

...WHEN FRANK CASTLE NO LONGER WANTED TO SHOOT...

...I KNEW THE END WAS NEAR.

I KNEW MY HUSBAND WAS DEEPLY DEPRESSED.

THAT HE WAS LOST AND EMPTY, AND THAT NOTHING WOULD EVER CHANGE.

BECAUSE HE WASN'T BEING THE MAN...

...HE WAS MEANT TO BE.

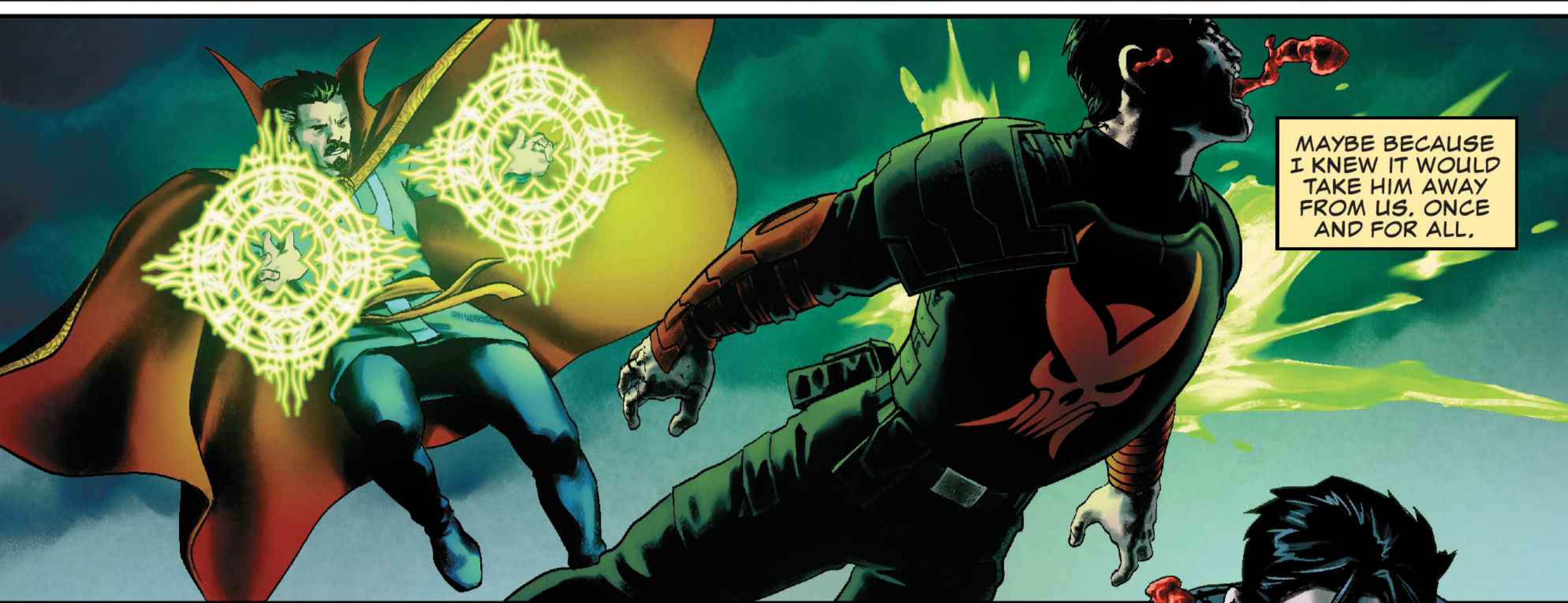




AND THERE WAS THAT PART OF ME
THAT FOR ONE MOMENT, WHILE
WATCHING HIM RAGE...HAD
WANTED HIM TO BECOME THAT...
"PERSON" ISN'T THE RIGHT WORD...



...THAT MACHINE OF
RETRIBUTION AND
BLOOD-DRENCHED
JUDGMENT.



MAYBE BECAUSE
I KNEW IT WOULD
TAKE HIM AWAY
FROM US, ONCE
AND FOR ALL.



AND PUT THIS...WHATEVER
THIS WRETCHED, ROTTING THING
BETWEEN US EVEN WAS...

...FINALLY OUT OF
ITS GODFORSAKEN
MISERY.



BUT HE WOULD NEVER DO THAT, NOT ON HIS OWN.



NOT WITHOUT A *SHOVE*.



WHERE WOULD YOU... LIKE TO GO?
ONCE I GET THE VAN RUNNING.



FRANK...
...WE'RE NEVER GOING ANYWHERE IN THAT STUPID VAN, AND YOU KNOW IT.



BUT... WE ARE GOING SOMEWHERE.
THE KIDS AND I ARE, AT LEAST.

FRANK WAS A
MAN OF SUCH
CONTRADICTIONS.

A SAVIOR AND
A TRAGEDY.

A CASUALTY OF
WAR SINCE THE
AGE OF 10.

THE MOST
COMPLICATED
MAN I'D EVER
KNOWN.

AND, AT THE
SAME TIME,
SO RIGIDLY
SIMPLE IT WAS
FRIGHTENING.



HE WAS
THE LOVE OF
MY LIFE.

EVEN AS HE
DROVE ME TO
DESPAIR.



THE MAN WHO
ALWAYS KEPT HIS
PEOPLE **SAFE**.

EXCEPT...
FOR THAT
ONE TIME.



WHEN IT
MATTERED
THE MOST.

WHAT ARE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT? WHERE
IS IT YOU'RE
GOING?



YOU TRIED
TO TELL ME ONCE,
ABOUT BEING A KID
ON A ROOFTOP,
SEEING SOMETHING
AWFUL.

MY HEART
BREAKS FOR THAT
KID, FRANK. I WANT
TO REACH OUT AND
HOLD HIM SO BAD. I'VE
BEEN WAITING FOR
HIM TO SHOW HIS
FACE AGAIN.



I CAN'T
WAIT ANYMORE.
I DON'T THINK HE'S
EVER COMING
BACK.

I THINK
SOMETHING **ELSE**
IS COMING TO TAKE
HIS PLACE. OR
MAYBE...



OR MAYBE
ONE NIGHT, YOU'LL
PUT A **GUN** IN YOUR
MOUTH.

EITHER WAY,
I DON'T WANT
THE KIDS AROUND
TO SEE IT.

MARIA...
WHAT ARE
YOU TRYING
TO SAY?



YOU'RE A
GOOD MAN,
FRANK. I STILL
BELIEVE
THAT.

BUT
THAT'S NOT ALL
YOU ARE.



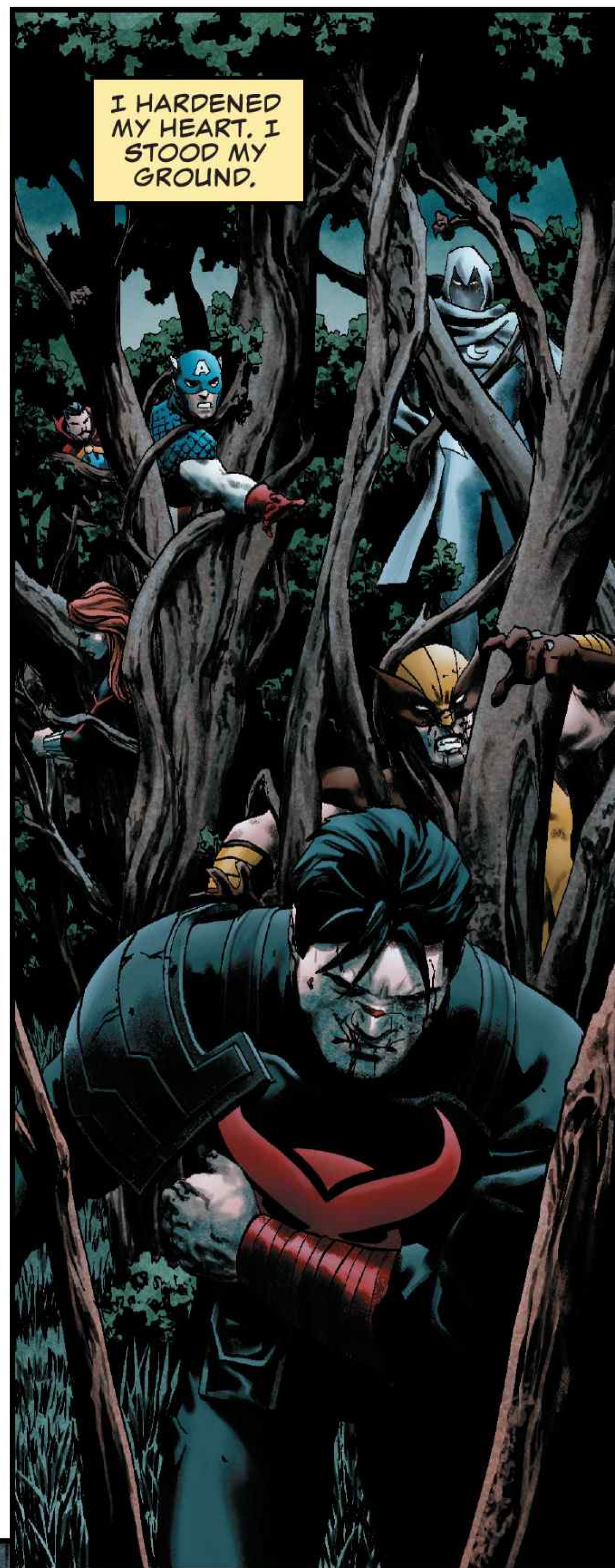
THAT DAY IN THE
PARK, THE WORLD
SLOWED DOWN.

YET IT ALL
STILL HAPPENED
SO FAST.



THE CITY WENT
SILENT.

EXCEPT FOR
THE THUNDER OF
MY WORDS.



I HARDENED
MY HEART. I
STOOD MY
GROUND.



AND I
FIRED.

MARIA!



SOMEDAY,
WE CAN TELL
THE KIDS
THAT.



NO,
WAIT--

FRANK...





MARIA...



I REMEMBER
FEELING MYSELF
CHOKING, DROWNING
IN MY OWN BLOOD.

I'M HERE,
FRANK.



I COULDN'T MOVE. COULDN'T
SEE THE CHILDREN. THAT WAS
EVEN WORSE THAN THE PAIN.

I DID IT.
MY WORK...
THE WAR...

IT'S
OVER.



I FELT MYSELF
SCREAMING
MORE THAN I
HEARD IT.

I'M HOME
NOW.

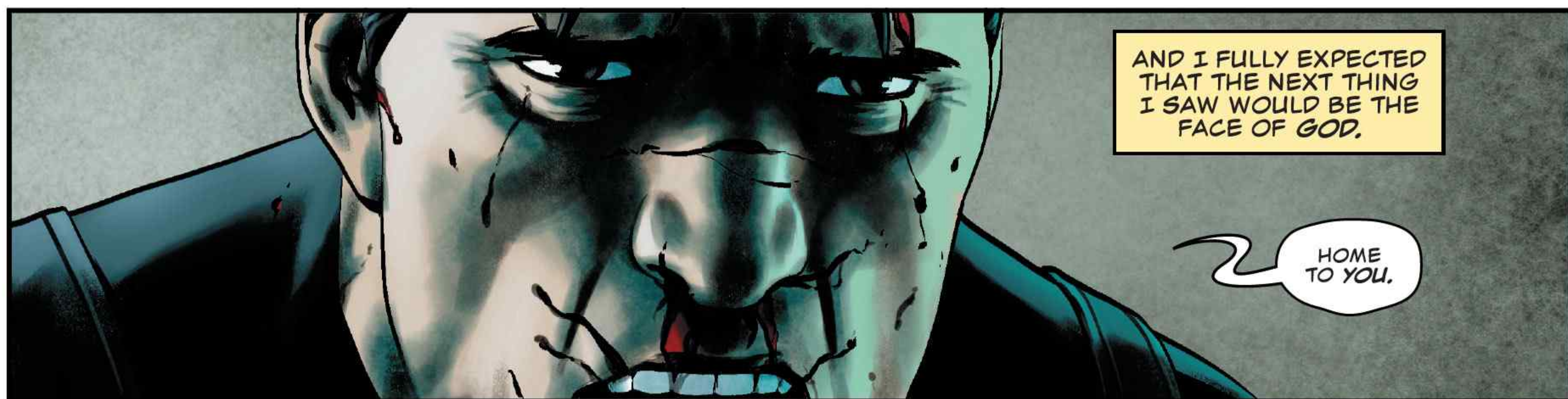
FOR
GOOD.



AND THEN, EVEN
WITH MY EYES
OPEN, THE
WORLD WENT RED.
AND THEN BLACK.

I WAITED.
I WAITED
SO LONG,
FRANK.

MARIA,
I'M HERE. I
CAME HOME.



AND I FULLY EXPECTED
THAT THE NEXT THING
I SAW WOULD BE THE
FACE OF GOD.

HOME
TO YOU.



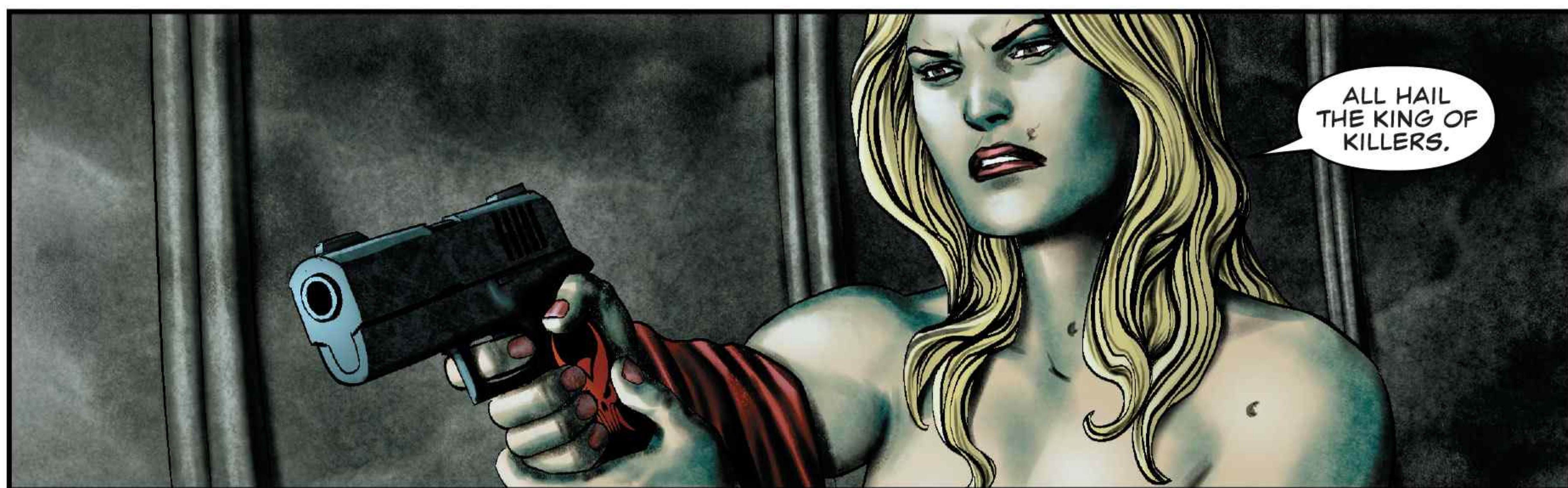
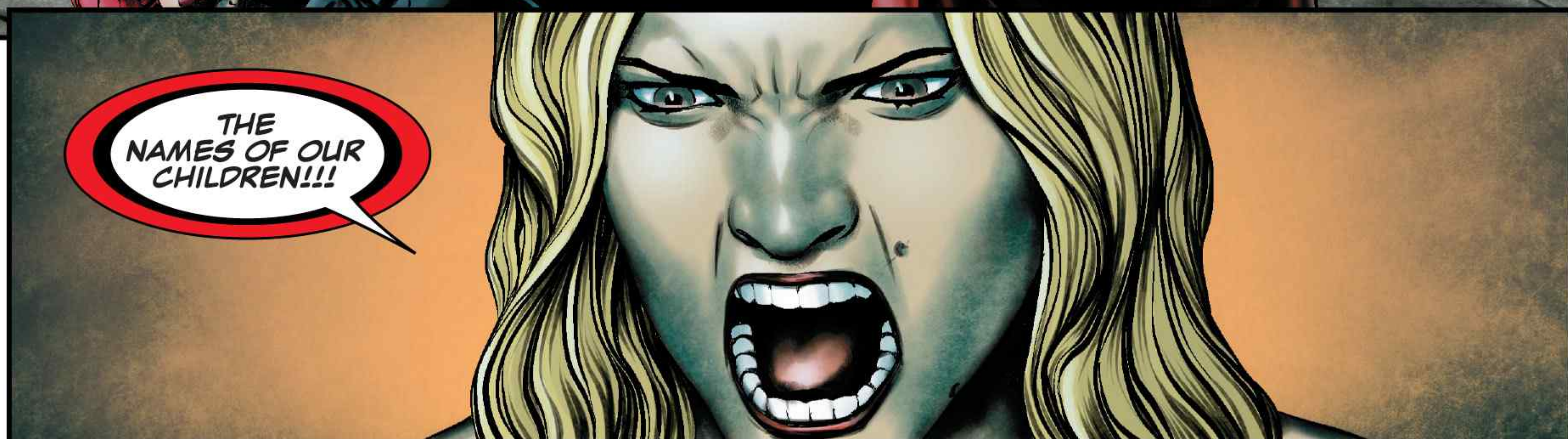
BUT ONCE I DIED
THAT DAY IN THE
PARK AND FOUND
MYSELF STANDING
IN THE GREAT
BEYOND...

NO,
FRANK.

YOU
NEVER
DID.



...ALL I SAW
BEFORE ME WAS
THE *BEAST*.



A full-page comic book illustration depicting a violent scene in a park. The ground is covered in a light blue blanket or tarp, which is heavily splattered with red blood. In the upper left, a person lies on their back, their head tilted back, with a pool of blood around their head. To their right, another person lies on their side, also with blood around them. In the lower left, a man in a light blue shirt and dark pants lies on his back, looking up with a distressed expression. His hands are raised, and his face shows signs of shock. To his right, a picnic basket sits on the ground, spilling its contents, including a bottle of beer and some food. The background is filled with dark, dense foliage, and the overall atmosphere is one of horror and chaos. The art style is characterized by heavy black lines and a limited color palette of blues, reds, and greys.

HELLO?!
THEY'RE
SHOOTING IN
THE PARK!!!

I DON'T
KNOW, THERE
WERE A BUNCH OF
THEM SHOOTING EACH
OTHER AND THEY RAN
AWAY BUT THERE
ARE PEOPLE HERE
SHOT!

OH
LORD,
THERE ARE
CHILDREN!
PLEASE
HURRY!



NEXT:

PUNISHER

#12



THE FINAL GUT-WRENCHING CHAPTER OF THIS ACCLAIMED LIMITED SERIES. FRANK CASTLE'S ENTIRE LIFE HAS LED TO THIS MOMENT. AFTER HE'S FOUGHT SO BRUTALLY HARD AND GONE TO SUCH STARTLING LENGTHS TO END HIS WAR ONCE AND FOR ALL, WILL FRANK FINALLY GET HIS WISH? IS THIS TRULY THE END OF THE PUNISHER?



ZONE